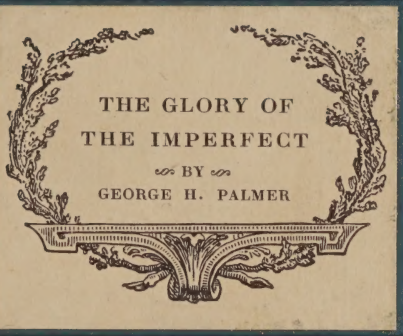
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THE IMPERFECT
BY
GEORGE H. PALMER

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THE GLORY OF THE IMPERFECT

BY

GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

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THE GLORY OF THE IMPERFECT

THE GLORY OF THE IMPERFECT[1]

A FEW years ago Matthew Arnold, after travelling in this country and revising the somewhat unfavorable opinion of us which he had formed earlier and at a distance, still wrote in his last paper on Civilization in the United States that America, in spite of its excellences, is an uninteresting land. He thought our institutions remarkable. He pointed out how close a fit exists between them and the character of the citizens, a fit so close as is hardly to be found in other countries. He saw much that is of promise in our future. But after all, he declares that no man will live here if he can live elsewhere, because America is an uninteresting land.

This remark of Mr. Arnold's is one which we may well ponder. As I consider how many of you are preparing to go forth from college and establish yourselves in this country, I ask myself whether you must find your days uninteresting. You certainly have not been finding them uninteresting here. Where were college days ever dull? It is a beautiful circumstance that, the world over, the period of

[1] Delivered at the first commencement of the Woman's College of Western Reserve University.

education is the period of romance. No such thing was ever heard of as a college student who did not enjoy himself, a college student who was not full of hope. And if this has been the case with us prosaic males of the past, what must be the experience of your own hopeful sex? I am sure you are looking forward with eagerness to your intended work. Is it to be blighted? Are you to find life dull? It might seem from the remark of Mr. Arnold that it would probably be so, for you must live in an uninteresting land.

When this remark of Mr. Arnold's was first made a multitude of voices in all parts of our country declared that Mr. Arnold did not know what he was talking about. As a stupid Englishman he had come here and had failed to see what our land contains. In reality every corner of it is stuffed with that beauty and distinction which he denied. For that was the offensive feature of his statement: he had said in substance the chief sources of interest are beauty and distinction. America is not beautiful. Its scenery, its people, its past, are not distinguished. It is impossible, therefore, for an intelligent and cultivated man to find permanent interests here.

The ordinary reply to these unpleasant sayings was, "America is beautiful, America is distinguished." But on the face of the matter this reply might well be distrusted. Mr. Arnold is not a man likely to

make such a mistake. He is a trained observer. His life has been passed in criticism, and criticism of an extremely delicate sort. It seems to me it must be rather his standards than his facts which are at fault. Many of us would be slow to believe our teacher had made an error in observation; for to many of us he has been a very great teacher indeed. Through him we have learned the charm of simplicity, the refinement of exactitude, the strength of finished form; we have learned calmness in trial too, the patience of duty, ability to wait when in doubt; in short, we have learned dignity, and he who teaches us dignity is not a man lightly to be forgotten or disparaged. I say, therefore, that this answer to Mr. Arnold, that he was in error, is one which on its face might prudently be distrusted.

But for other than prudential reasons I incline to agree with Mr. Arnold's opinion. Even though I were not naturally disposed to credit his judgment, I should be obliged to acknowledge that my own observations largely coincide with his. In Europe I think I find beauty more abundant than in America. Certainly the distinguished objects, the distinguished persons, whom I go there to see, are more numerous than those I might by searching find here. I cannot think this portion of Mr. Arnold's statement can be impugned. And must we then accept his conclusion and agree that your lives, while sheltered in this in-

teresting college, are themselves interesting; but that when you go forth the romance is to pass away? I do not believe it, because I question the standard which Mr. Arnold employs. He tells us that the sources of the interesting are beauty and distinction. I doubt it. However much delight and refreshment these may contribute to our lives, I do not believe they predominantly constitute our interests.

Evidently Mr. Arnold cannot have reached his opinion through observation, for the commonest facts of experience confute him. There is in every community a certain class of persons whose business it is to discover what people regard as interesting. These are the newspaper editors; they are paid to find out for us interesting matters every day. There is nothing they like better than to get hold of something interesting which has not been observed before. Are they then searchers for beauty and distinction? I should say not. Here are the subjects which these seekers after interesting things discussed in my morning paper. There is an account of disturbances in South America. There is a statement about Mr. Blaine's health. There is a report of a prize fight. There are speculations about the next general election. There is a description of a fashionable wedding. These things interest me, and I suspect they interest the majority of the readers of that paper; though they can hardly be called beautiful or distin-

guished. Obviously, therefore, if Mr. Arnold had inspected the actual interests of to-day, he would have been obliged to recognize some other basis for them than beauty and distinction.

Yet I suppose all will feel it would be better if the trivial matters which excite our interest in the morning journal were of a more beautiful, of a more distinguished sort. Our interests would be more honorable then. These things interest merely because they are facts, not because they are beautiful. A fact is interesting through being a fact, and this commonest and most basal of interests Mr. Arnold has overlooked. He has not perceived that life itself is its own unceasing interest.

Before we can decide, however, whether he has overlooked anything more, we must determine what is meant by beauty. Let us analyze the matter a little. Let us see if we can detect why the beautiful and the distinguished are interesting, and still how we can provide a place for the other interests which are omitted in his statement. If we should look at a tree and ask ourselves why this tree is more beautiful than another, we should probably find we had thought it so on some such grounds as these: the total bunch of branches and leaves, that exquisite green mass sunning itself, is no larger than can well be supported on the brown trunk. It is large enough; there is nothing lacking. If it were

smaller, the office of the trunk would hardly be fulfilled. If larger, the trunk would be overpowered. Those branches which extend themselves to the right adequately balance those which are extended to the left. Scrutinizing it, we find every leaf in order, each one ready to aërate its little sap and so conduce to the life of the whole. There is no decay, no broken branch. Nothing is deficient, but at the same time there is nothing superfluous. Each part ministers to every part. In all parts the tree is proportionate — beautiful, intrinsically beautiful, because it is unsuperfluous, unlacking.

And when we turn to other larger, more intricately beautiful objects, we find the same principle involved. Fulness of relations among the parts, perfection of organism, absence of incongruity, constitute the beauty of the object. Were you ever in Wiltshire in England, and did you visit the splendid seat of the Earls of Pembroke, Wilton House? It is a magnificent pile, designed by Holbein the painter, erected before Elizabeth began to reign. Its green lawns, prepared ages ago, were adapted to their positions originally and perform their ancient offices to-day. Time has changed its gardens only by making them more lovely than when they were planned. So harmonious with one another are grounds and castle that, looking on the stately dwelling, one imagines that the Creator himself must have had it in mind in

his design of the spot. And when you enter, all is equally congruous. Around the central court runs the cloistered statuary gallery, out of which open the several halls. Passing through these, you notice the portraits not only of past members of the family — men who have been among the most distinguished of England's worthies — but also portraits of the eminent friends of the Pembrokes, painted by notable artists who were often themselves also friends of the family. In the library is shown Sidney's "Arcadia," written in this very garden, with a lock of Elizabeth's hair inclosed. In the chief hall a play of Shakespeare's is reported to have been performed by his company. Half a dozen names that shine in literature lend intellectual glory to the place. But as you walk from room to room, amazed at the accumulation of wealth and proud tradition, you perceive how each casual object makes its separate contribution to the general impression of stateliness. A glance from a window discloses an enchanting view: in the distance, past the cedars, rises the spire of Salisbury Cathedral, one of the most peaceful and aspiring in England. All parts — scenery, buildings, rich possessions, historic heritages — minister to parts. Romantic imagination is stirred. It is beautiful, beautiful beyond anything America can show.

And if we turn to that region where beauty is most subtly embodied, if we turn to human character,

we find the conditions not dissimilar. The character which impresses us most is that which has fully organized its powers, so that every ability finds its appropriate place without prominence; one with no false humility and without self-assertion; a character which cannot be overthrown by petty circumstance, but, steadfast in itself, no part lacking, no part superfluous, easily lets its ample functions assist one another in all that they are summoned to perform. When we behold a man like this, we say, "This is what I would be. Here is the goal toward which I would tend. This man, like Wilton House, like the beautiful tree, is a finished thing." It is true when we turn our attention back and once more criticise, we see that it is not so. No human character can be finished. It is its glory that it cannot be. It must ever press forward; each step reached is but the vantage-ground for a further step. There is no completeness in human character — in human character save one.

And must we then consider human character uninteresting? According to Mr. Arnold's standard perhaps we ought to do so. But through this very case the narrowness of that standard becomes apparent. Mr. Arnold rightly perceives that beauty is one of our higher interests. It certainly is not our only or our highest, because in that which is most profoundly interesting, human life, the completeness of parts

which constitutes beauty is never reached. There must obviously be another and a higher source of interest, one too exalted to be found where awhile ago I sketched it, in the mere occurrence of a fact. We cannot say that all events, simply because they occur, are alike interesting. To find in them an intelligent interest we must rate their worth. I agree, accordingly, with Mr. Arnold in thinking that it is the passion for perfection, the assessment of worths, which is at the root of all enduring interests. But I believe that in the history of the world this passion for perfection, this deepest root of human interests, has presented itself in two forms. The Greek conceived it in one way, the Christian has conceived it in another.

It was the office of that astonishing people, the Greeks, to teach us to honor completeness, the majesty of the rounded whole. We see this in every department of their marvellous life. Whenever we look at a Greek statue, it seems impossible that it should be otherwise without loss; we cannot imagine any portion changed; the thing has reached its completeness. Before it we can only bow and feel at rest. Just so it is when we examine Greek architecture. There too we find the same ordered proportion, the same adjustment of part to part. And if we turn to Greek literature, the stately symmetry is no less remarkable. What page of Sophocles

could be stricken out? What page — what sentence? Just enough, not more than enough! The thought has grown, has asserted its entirety; and when that entirety has been reached, it has stopped, delighted with its own perfection. A splendid ideal, an ideal which never can fail, I am sure, to interest man so long as he remains intelligent!

And yet this beautiful Greek work shows only one aspect of the world. It omitted something, it omitted formative life. Joy in birth, delight in beginnings, interest in origins, — these things did not belong to the Greek; they came in with Christianity. It is Jesus Christ who turns our attention toward growth, and so teaches us to delight in the imperfect rather than in the perfect. It is he who, wishing to give to his disciples a model of what they should be, does not select the completed man, but takes the little child and sets him before them and to the supercilious says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." He teaches us to reverenee the beginning of things. And at first thought it might well seem that this reverence for the imperfect was a retrogression. What! is not a consummate man more admirable than a child? "No," Jesus answered; and because he answered so, pity was born. Before the coming of Jesus Christ, I think we may say that the sick, the afflicted, the child — shall I not say the woman? — were but slightly understood. It is be-

cause God has come down from heaven, manifesting even himself in forms of imperfection, it is on this account that our intellectual horizon has been enlarged. We may now delight in the lowly, we may stoop and gather imperfect things and rejoice in them, — rejoice beyond the old Greek rejoicing.

Yet it is easy to mistake the nature of this change of standard, and in doing so to run into grave moral danger. If we content ourselves with the imperfect rather than with the perfect, we are barbarians. We are not Christians nor are we Greeks, we are barbarians. But that is not the spirit of Jesus. He teaches us to catch the future in the instant, to see the infinite in the finite, to watch the growth of the perfect out of the imperfect. And he teaches us that this delight in progress, in growth, in aspiration, in completing, may rightly be greater than our exultation in completeness. In his view the joy of perfecting is beyond the joy of perfection.

Now I want to be sure that you young women, who are preparing yourselves here for larger life and are soon to emerge into the perplexing world, go forth with clear and Christian purpose. For though what I have been discussing may appear dry and abstract, it is an extremely practical matter. Consider a moment in which direction you are to seek the interests of your life. Will you demand that the things about you shall already possess their perfec-

tion? Will you ask from life that it be completed, finished, beautiful? If so, you are doomed to dreary days. Or are you to get your intellectual eyes open, see beauty in the making, and come to rejoice in it there rather than after it is made? That is the question I wish to present to-day; and I shall ask you to examine several provinces of life and see how different they appear when surveyed from one point of view or from the other.

Undoubtedly all of you on leaving here will go into some home, either the home of your parents or — less fortunate — some stranger's home. And when you come there, I think I can foretell one thing: it will be a tolerably imperfect place in which you find yourself. You will notice a great many points in which it is improvable; that is to say, a great many respects in which you might properly wish it otherwise. It will seem to you, I dare say, a little plain, a little commonplace, compared with your beautiful college and the college life here. I doubt whether you will find all the members of your family — dear though they may be — so wise, so gentle-mannered, so able to contribute to your intellectual life as are your companions here. Will you feel then, "Ah! home is a dull place; I wish I were back in college again! I think I was made for college life. Possibly enough I was made for a wealthy life. I am sure I was made for a comfortable life. But I do not find

these things here. I will sit and wish I had them. Of course I ought not to enjoy a home that is short of perfection; and I recognize that this is a good way from complete." Is this to be your attitude? Or are you going to say, "How interesting this home! What a brave struggle the dear people are making with the resources at their command! What kindness is shown by my tired mother; how swift she is in finding out the many small wants of the household! How diligent my father! Should I, if I had had only their narrow opportunities, be so intelligent, so kind, so self-sacrificing as they? What can I do to show them my gratitude? What can I contribute toward the furtherance, the enlargement, the perfecting, of this home?" That is the wise course. Enter this home not merely as a matter of loving duty, but find in it also your own strong interests, and learn to say, "This home is not a perfect home, happily not a perfect home. I have something here to do. It is far more interesting than if it were already complete."

And again, you will not always live in a place so attractive as Cleveland. There are cities which have not your beautiful lake, your distant views, your charming houses excellently shaded with trees. These things are exceptional and cannot always be yours. You may be obliged to live in an American town which appears to you highly unfinished, a town which constantly suggests that much still remains to be

done. And then are you going to say, "This place is not beautiful, and I of course am a lover of the beautiful. How could one so superior as I rest in such surroundings? I could not respect myself were I not discontented." Is that to be your attitude? It is, I am sorry to think, the attitude of many who go from our colleges. They have been taught to reverence perfection, to honor excellence; and instead of making it their work to carry this excellence forth, and to be interested in spreading it far and wide in the world, they sit down and mourn that it has not yet come. How dull the world would be had it come! Perfection, beauty? It constitutes a resting-place for us; it does not constitute our working-place.

I maintain, therefore, in regard to our land as a whole that there is no other so interesting on the face of the earth; and I am led to this conviction by the very reasoning which brought Mr. Arnold to a contrary opinion. I accept his judgment of the beauty of America. His premise is correct, but it should have conducted him to the opposite conclusion. In America we still are in the making. We are not yet beautiful and distinguished; and that is why America, beyond every other country, awakens a noble interest. The beauty which is in the old lands, and which refreshes for a season, is after all a species of death. Those who dwell among such scenes are appeased,

they are not quickened. Let them keep their past; we have our future. We may do much. What they can do is largely at an end.

In literature also I wish to bring these distinctions before you, these differences of standard; and perhaps I cannot accomplish this better than by exhibiting them as they are presented in a few verses from the poet of the imperfect. I suppose if we try to mark out with precision the work of Mr. Browning,— I mean not to mark it out as the Browning societies do, but to mark it out with precision, — we might say that its distinctive feature is that he has guided himself by the principle on which I have insisted: he has sought for beauty where there is seeming chaos; he has loved growth, has prized progress, has noted the advance of the spiritual, the pressing on of the finite soul through hindrance to its junction with the infinite. This it is which has inspired his somewhat crabbed verses, and has made men willing to undergo the labor of reading them, that they too may partake of his insight. In one of his poems — one which seems to me to contain some of his sublimest as well as some of his most commonplace lines, the poem on "Old Pictures in Florence," — he discriminates between Greek and Christian art in much the same way I have done. In "Greek Art," Mr. Browning says: —

> You saw yourself as you wished you were,
> As you might have been, as you cannot be;

THE GLORY OF THE IMPERFECT

Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there;
  And grew content in your poor degree
With your little power, by those statues' godhead,
  And your little scope, by their eyes' full sway,
And your little grace, by their grace embodied,
  And your little date, by their forms that stay.

You would fain be kinglier, say, than I am?
  Even so, you will not sit like Theseus.
You would prove a model? The son of Priam
  Has yet the advantage in arms' and knees' use.
You're wroth — can you slay your snake like Apollo?
  You're grieved — still Niobe's the grander!
You live — there's the Racers' frieze to follow:
  You die — there's the dying Alexander.

So, testing your weakness by their strength,
  Your meagre charms by their rounded beauty,
Measured by Art in your breadth and length,
  You learned — to submit is a mortal's duty.

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,
  You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day
And cried with a start — What if we so small
  Be greater and grander the while than they!
Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?
  In both, of such lower types are we
Precisely because of our wider nature;
  For time, theirs — ours, for eternity.

To-day's brief passion limits their range;
  It seethes with the morrow for us and more.
They are perfect — how else? they shall never change:
  We are faulty — why not? we have time in store.
The Artificer's hand is not arrested
  With us; we are rough-hewn, no-wise polished:
They stand for our copy, and once invested
  With all they can teach, we shall see them abolished.

You will notice that in this subtle study Mr. Browning points out how through contact with perfection there may come content with our present lot. This I call the danger of perfection, our possible belittlement through beauty. For in the lives of us all there should be a divine discontent, — not devilish discontent, but divine discontent, — a consciousness that life may be larger than we have yet attained, that we are to press beyond what we have reached, that joy lies in the future, in that which has not been found, rather than in the realized present. And it seems to me if ever a people were called on to understand this glory of the imperfect, it is we of America, it is you of the Middle West; it is especially you who are undertaking here the experiment of a woman's college. You are at the beginning, and that fact should lend an interest to your work which cannot so readily be realized in our older institutions. As you look eastward upon my own huge university, Harvard University, it probably appears to you singularly beautiful, reverend in its age, magnificent in its endowments, equable in its working; perhaps you contemplate it as nearing perfection, and contrast your incipient college with it as hardly deserving the name. You are entirely mistaken. Harvard University, to its glory be it said, is enormously unfinished; it is a great way from perfect; it is full of blemishes. We are tinkering at it all the time; and if it were not

so, I for one should decline to be connected with it. Its interest for me would cease. You are to start free from some trammels that we feel. Because we have so large a past laid upon us we have not some freedoms of growth, some opportunities of enlargement, which you possess. Accordingly, in your very experiment here you have a superb illustration of the principle I am trying to explain. This young and imperfect college should interest you who are members of it; it should interest this intelligent city. Wise patrons should find here a germ capable of such broad and interesting growth as may well call out their heartiest enthusiasm.

If then the modes of accepting the passion for perfection are so divergent as I have indicated, is it possible to suggest methods by which we may discipline ourselves in the nobler way of seeking the interests of life? — I mean by taking part with things in their beginnings, learning to reverence them there, and so attaining an interest which will continually be supported and carried forward. You may look with some anxiety upon the doctrine which I have laid down. You may say, "But beauty is seductive; beauty allures me. I know that the imperfect in its struggle toward perfection is the nobler matter. I know that America is, for him who can see all things, a more interesting land than Spain. Yes, I know this, but I find it hard to feel it. My strong tempta-

tion is to lie and dream in romance, in ideal perfection. By what means may I discipline myself out of this degraded habit and bring myself into the higher life, so that I shall always be interested in progress, in the future rather than in the past, in the on-going rather than in the completed life?" I cannot give an exact and final receipt for this better mind. A persistently studied experience must be the teacher. To-day you may understand what I say, you may resolve to live according to the methods I approve. But you may be sure that to-morrow you will need to learn it all over again. And yet I think I can mention several forms of discipline, as I may call them. I can direct your attention to certain modes by which you may instruct yourselves how to take an interest in the imperfect thing, and still keep that interest an honorable one.

In my judgment, then, your first care should be to learn to observe. A simple matter — one, I dare say, which it will seem to you difficult to avoid. You have a pair of eyes; how can you fail to observe? Ah! but eyes can only look, and that is not observing. We must not rest in looking, but must penetrate into things, if we would find out what is there. And to find this out is worth while, for everything when observed is of immense interest. There is no object so remote from human life that when we come to study it we may not detect within its narrow com-

pass illuminating and therefore interesting matter. But it makes a great difference whether we do thus really observe, whether we hold attention to the thing in hand, and see what it contains. Once, after puzzling long over the charm of Homer, I applied to a learned friend and said to him, "Can you tell me why Homer is so interesting? Why can't you and I write as he wrote? Why is it that his art is lost, and that to-day it is impossible for us to awaken an interest at all comparable to his?" — "Well," said my friend, "I have often meditated on that, but it seems to come to about this: Homer looked long at a thing. Why," said he, "do you know that if you should hold up your thumb and look at it long enough, you would find it immensely interesting?" Homer looks a great while at his thumb. He sees precisely the thing he is dealing with. He does not confuse it with anything else. It is sharp to him; and because it is sharp to him it stands out sharply for us over thousands of years. Have you acquired this art, or do you hastily glance at insignificant objects? Do you see the thing exactly as it is? Do you strip away from it your own likings and dislikings, your own previous notions of what it ought to be? Do you come face to face with things? If you do, the hardest situation in life may well be to you a delight. For you will not regard hardships, but only opportunities. Possibly you may even feel, "Yes,

here are just the difficulties I like to explore. How can one be interested in easy things? The hard things of life are the ones for which we ought to give thanks." So we may feel if we have made the cool and hardy temper of the observer our own, if we have learned to put ourselves into a situation and to understand it on all sides. Why, the things on which we have thus concentrated attention become our permanent interests. For example, unluckily when I was trained I was not disciplined in botany. I cannot, therefore, now observe the rose. Some of you can, for you have been studying botany here. I have to look stupidly on the total beauty of the lovely object; I can see it only as a whole, while you, fine observer, who have trained your powers to pierce it, can comprehend its very structure and see how marvellously the blooming thing is put together. My eyes were dulled to that long ago; I cannot observe it. Beware, do not let yourselves grow dull. Observe, observe, observe in every direction! Keep your eyes open. Go forward, understanding that the world was made for your knowledge, that you have the right to enter into and possess it.

And then besides, you need to train yourselves to sympathize with that which lies beyond you. It is easy to sympathize with that which lies within you. Many persons go through life sympathizing with themselves incessantly. What unhappy persons!

How unfit for anything important! They are full of themselves and answer their own motion, while there beyond them lies all the wealthy world in which they might be sharers. For sympathy is feeling with, — it is the identification of ourself with that which at present is not ourself. It is going forth and joining that which we behold, not standing aloof and merely observing, as I said at first. When we observe, the object we observe is alien to us; when we sympathize, we identify ourselves with it. You may go into a home and observe, and you will make every person in that home wretched. But go into a home and sympathize, find out what lies beyond you there, see how differently those persons are thinking and feeling from the ways in which you are accustomed to think and feel; yet notice how imperfect you are in yourself, and how important it is that persons should be fashioned thus different from you if even your own completion is to come; then, I say, you will find yourself becoming large in your own being, and a large benefactor of others.

Do not stunt sympathy, then. Do not allow walls to rise up and hem it in. Never say to yourself, "This is my way; I don't do so and so. I know only this and that; I don't want to know anything else. You other people may have that habit, but these are my habits, and I always do thus and thus." Do not say that. Nothing is more immoral than moral psy-

chology. You should have no interest in yourself as you stand; because a larger selfhood lies beyond you, and you should be going forth and claiming your heritage there. Do not stand apart from the movements of the country, — the political, charitable, religious, scientific, literary movements, — however distastefully they may strike you. Identify yourself with them, sympathize with them. They all have a noble side; seek it out and claim it as your own. Throw yourself into all life and make it nobly yours.

But I am afraid it would be impossible for you thus to observe, thus to sympathize, unless you bring within your imperfect self just grounds of self-respect. You must contribute to things if you would draw from things. You must already have acquired some sort of excellence in order to detect larger excellence elsewhere. You should therefore have made yourself the master of something which you can do, and do on the whole better than anybody else. That is the moral aspect of competition, that one person can do a certain thing best and so it is given him to do. Some of you who are going out into the world before long will, I fear, be astonished to find that the world is already full. It has no place for you; it never anticipated your coming and it has reserved for you no corner. Your only means of gaining a corner will be by doing something better than the people who are already there. Then they will make you a place. And that

is what you should be considering here. You should be training yourself to do something well, it really does not matter much what. Can you make dresses well? Can you cook a good loaf of bread? Can you write a poem or run a typewriter? Can you do anything well? Are you a master somewhere? If you are, the world will have a place for you; and more than that, you will have within yourself just grounds for self-respect.

To sum up, what I have been saying throughout this address merely amounts to this: that the imperfect thing — the one thing of genuine interest in all the world — gets its right to be respected only through its connection with the totality of things. Do not, then, when you leave college say to yourself, "I know Greek. That is a splendid thing to know. These people whom I am meeting do not know it and are obviously of a lower grade than I." That will not be self-respectful, because it shows that you have not understood your proper place. You should respect yourself as a part of all, and not as of independent worth. To call this wide world our own larger self is not too extravagant an expression. But if we are to count it so, then we must count the particular thing which we are capable of doing as merely our special contribution to the great self. And we must understand that many are making similar contributions. What I want you to feel, therefore, is the

profound conception of mutual helpfulness and resulting individual dignity which St. Paul has set forth, according to which each of us is performing a special function in the common life, and that life of all is recognized as the divine life, the manifestation of the life of the Father. When you have come to that point, when you have seen in the imperfect a portion, an aspect, of the total, perfect, divine life, then I am not afraid life will be uninteresting. Indeed I would say to every one who goes from this college, you can count with confidence on a life which shall be vastly more interesting beyond the college walls than ever it has proved here, if you have once acquired the art of penetrating into the imperfect, and finding in limited, finite life the infinite life. "To apprehend thus, draws us a profit from all things we see."

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